

May 8, 2015

Dr. Jane Pisano
Director and President
Museum of Natural History
900 Exposition Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90805

Dear Dr. Pisano:

Members of the Quality and Productivity Commission were very impressed with the tour of the Nature Gardens and Erika J. Glazer Family Edible Garden and the update on museum operations received at the Department visit on May 7, 2015. It is clear that you and the Natural History Museum (NHM) staff have listened to the members and made tremendous strides in enhancing the visitor experience since our last meeting two years ago.

We commend your effective use of technology to compile demographic data, conduct surveys and to track attendance, revenue, café and gift shop income. Commissioners also cited your attention to visitor satisfaction, through focus groups and market research surveys that benchmark NHM alongside other museums. A major outcome of the "listening to the customer" approach has been a huge jump in NHM membership, from 13,000 in 2010 to over 40,000 families today.

The Urban Safari initiative, which includes the Glazer Garden and a Nature Garden, is an important program to educate and empower residents with the knowledge to grow their own fruits and vegetables. They also learn to value local wildlife. The Nature Garden has made the Natural History Museum a hub for environmental groups and citizen science groups. And, the Malaise Trap has led to the discovery and trapping of 32 new species of bugs. We share the vision of NHM 2050, where it champions a harmonious co-existence between County residents and nature.

Commissioners also were impressed with your quality and productivity improvements in the following areas:

- Conducting weekly staff meetings to review performance improvement metrics across all divisions – ticketing, research, membership, asset management, collections and payroll

We support plain language

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**County of Los Angeles
Quality and Productivity
Commission**

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***"To enrich lives through
effective and caring service"***

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- Maintaining communication with major developers on Museum Row, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Metro, on environmental issues impacting the Page Museum and the historic La Brea Tar Pits, which attract thousands of local and international visitors each year
- Listening to and implementing recommendations from UCLA business students, who studied the NHM website and pointed out that moving from desktop to a mobile-friendly, responsive design would help to convert web page visits into increased interactions with the NHM

We look forward to working with the department on:

- Future collaborations with the Public Library, health centers and other entities to promote the Natural History Museum collections and programs, and extend their reach across the County
- Identifying funding to obtain storage space for newly acquired fossil collections excavated at the La Brea Tar Pits, and to upgrade the sea mobile and earth mobile, which bring the NHM to all areas of the County
- Re-launching the website for the William S. Hart Museum
- Submitting entries for the Productivity and Quality Awards

On behalf of the Commission, thank you for an engaging discussion. We will continue to work closely with your Productivity Manager Dawn McDivitt. Please contact Victoria Pipkin-Lane, Executive Director, at (213) 974-1361 for additional information.

Sincerely,



RODNEY C. GIBSON, PH.D.
Chair

RCG:VPL:LP

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